

COLD-STORAGE CATS.

Felines That Live Constantly in a Freezing Temperature.

Through Their Perpetual Exposure to the Frigid Atmosphere the Animals Have Acquired Heavy Coats of Fur.

In the cold-storage warehouses of Pittsburgh, says the Pittsburgh Dispatch, when they were established, there were no rats or mice. The temperature in the cold rooms was too low to admit the existence of these nocturnal animals. The keepers of these places soon found, however, that the rat was an animal of remarkable adaptability. The ordinary rat of the United States came originally from Norway. In that country, naturalists say, the animal was much better prepared to withstand the climate than it is in this country were it suddenly transported to a cold climate. If any ordinary cellar rat were put in a cage, conveyed by ship to Spitzbergen, and released on that icy island, it would freeze to death in a few hours. Yet there are rats in Spitzbergen. These rats are fat rascals, with long and very thick hair, and have adapted themselves to the temperature of the region.

It is just such rats as those of the northern region that have adapted themselves to the cold-storage warehouses. After some of these houses had been in operation for a few months the attendants found that rats were at work in the rooms where the temperature was constantly kept below the freezing point. In the warehouse of the Pittsburgh Storage company, before its burning last fall, two rats were killed by the employees. They were found to be clothed in wonderfully long and thick fur, even their tapering, snakelike tails being covered by a thick growth of hair. Rats of this variety, whose coats have adapted themselves to the conditions under which they live, have domesticated themselves in all the storage warehouses in Pittsburgh.

The prevalence of rats in these places led to the introduction of cats. Now it is well known that pussy is a lover of warmth and comfort. She delights to lie close to the fire when the snow is drifting around the house, and to wash her face with her warm, soft paws. Cats, however, have a great adaptability to conditions. The wild cat of Africa, now extinct and living only in the form of its domestic congener, was nursed by the Egyptians as a timepiece, and so regulated her eye that by a glance at them the inhabitant of Cairo was able to tell the time of day without the advent of Seth Warner.

When cats were introduced into storage houses and turned loose in the cold rooms they pined and died because of the excessive cold. It appears, in the course of investigation into this subject, that one cat was finally introduced into the rooms of the Pennsylvania Storage company which was able to withstand the low temperature. She

was a cat of unusually thick fur and she thrived and grew fat in quarters where the temperature was below thirty degrees. By careful nursing a brood of seven kittens was developed in this warehouse into sturdy, thick-furred cats that love an Icelandic climate. They have been distributed among the other cold-storage houses of Pittsburgh, and have created a peculiar breed of cats, adapted to the conditions under which they must exist to find their prey.

These cats are short-tailed, chubby pussies, with hair as thick and full of under-fur as the wild cats of the Canadian woods. One of the remarkable things about them is the development of their "feelers." These long, stiff hairs that protrude from a cat's nose and eyebrows are, in the ordinary domestic feline, about three inches long. In the cats cultivated in the cold warehouses the "feelers" grow to a length of five and six inches. This is probably because the light is dim in these places and all movements must be the result of the feeling sense. In these two respects, the growth of thick hair and the development of "feelers," the domestic cat shows the operation of Darwin's well-known law of the survival of the fittest in the development of their conditions adapted to the environment.

The storage people say that if one of these furry cats is taken into the open air, particularly during this hot spell, it will die in a few hours. It cannot endure a high temperature, and an introduction to a stove would send it into a fit.

Finding New Rocks in the Sea.

It appears from the annual report of the hydrographer of the British navy that two hundred rocks and other dangerous objects to navigation were discovered during last year—twenty-six by surveying vessels, thirty-five by other ships belonging to the navy, twenty-two by British and foreign vessels, one hundred and five were reported by colonial and foreign governments and thirteen were discovered by vessels striking on them. The resurveys of Spithead, Pembroke and Plymouth sound have been going on, and serious obstacles were discovered at the Welsh port, while at Plymouth it turned out that the depth in the main anchorage was very much less than is shown on the chart, so that the largest ships would be certain to touch bottom in some places if the water sank to its lowest level. Dredging has therefore been undertaken.

She Pleased the Queen.

It is said that Miss Majendie, who has just received the much-coveted position of maid of honor to Queen Victoria, owes her good luck to a mere freak of magnetic attraction. The queen saw her for the first time when she came to sing at the little Sunday service arranged by Princess Beatrice at the Villa Fabbrieotti, and was particularly struck by her pleasant face and sweet voice. It was with the utmost surprise that the circle, as well as the young lady herself, learned of the honor designed for her.

The
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